into and if so, the details thereof ;

(d) whether Government would like to take some positive steps to reactivate the scheme; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The Scheme is still in its initial stages. As it is a new activity for banks, they require time to develop necessary systems and strategies for marketing the scheme. The Reserve Bank of India has directed banks to give more publicity to the scheme. Government has exempted the transfer of gold certificates from payment of stamp duty.

Higher rate of interest on Small Saving Schemes

3941. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Senior Citizens let down by postal department" appearing in the Times of India dated 3rd August, 2001;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the reasons for not allowing a higher rate of interest on small savings to the senior citizens on their investment on the lines of Reserve Bank's policy to grant similar concession to them; and

(d) whether a similar concession is proposed to be announced to the senior citizens and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The rates of interest on various small savings schemes have been rationalised by the Government as the real rates of interest on these schemes were considered to be high preventing downward movement of other rates of interest in the economy. This decision has been taken in the larger interest of the economy and will benefit all sections of the Society. There is no proposal to offer higher rates of interest to senior citizens.

Payment of Salaries to Employees of Manipur

3942. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased

to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the employees of State Government of Manipur have not been paid their salaries for two/three months;

(b) if so, the measures taken up for payment of salaries;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the restriction of making result of interview out for appointment because of financial position is out now; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) As reported by the Government of Manipur, the salaries for the month of July, 2001 have not been paid to their employees.

(b) The financial Management of State including payment of salaries to its employees is primarily the responsibility of State Government. However, as indicated by the State Government, the Legislative Assembly of Manipur had authorised expenditure for four months only which lapsed on 31st July, 2001. Government of Manipur is awaiting passing of Vote on Account by the Parliament.

(c) and (d) As reported by the State Government, the ban still exists for direct recruitment except in a few cases where the Hon'ble Courts have directed declaration of result.

Debts and Interests on North-Eastern States

3943. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total amount of debts and interest on the special loan due on North East States, State-wise;

(b) the recommendations which were made by IXth Finance Commission regarding the moratorium on the payments of these loans and interest thereto; and

(c) if so, the action taken in this regard and if not, the reasons for neglecting the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL) : (a) No special loans were given to North Eastern